

July 13, 2007

COLORADO NRCS APPROVES APPROXIMATELY \$618,000 IN CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS (CIG)

Lakewood, CO -- The Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service has recently funded 10 Conservation Innovation Grants proposals totaling approximately \$618,000.

“These grants will be funded to develop and refine cutting-edge conservation technologies and approaches to help producers maintain viable agricultural operations,” said Randy Randall, Assistant State Conservationist for Operations, Lakewood, CO.

The 10 approved projects address traditional natural resource issues concerning agriculture such as water quantity, grazing lands and forest health, and soil resource management as well as emerging natural resource issues including energy conservation.

A short narrative on each project proposal is as follows:

- **“Generating Farmstead Power”**

Submitted by the Bent Conservation District

This project will demonstrate the feasibility of utilizing wind energy on average size farms. This project will select 5-6 farmsteads (Demo sites) to install wind turbines. Demonstration sites will be monitored and the reduction of fossil fuel energy use will be tracked.

- **“Integration of Tamarisk biological control into a riparian restoration program”**

Submitted by the Colorado Department of Agriculture

This demonstration project will integrate biological control of tamarisk into a riparian restoration program. This will be on land prepared using two different mechanical techniques of tamarisk removal and a burned area. Monitoring of these sites to check biological effectiveness on resprouting plants, and if biological control will weaken the tamarisk plant before a burn.

- more -

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

- **“Developing Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Solutions for Rural Electric Providers in Colorado”**
Submitted by the International Center for Appropriate and Sustainable Technology-ICAST
Plans will be developed for two rural electric companies to implement various demand side management (DSM), energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energy (RE) technologies. The project will demonstrate, through a pilot project the water and energy savings possible with modern irrigation technology.
- **“Monitoring Deep Percolation Beneath Irrigated Fields in Northern Colorado”**
Submitted by the Central Colorado Water Conservancy District
Project will establish two monitoring sites to monitor deep percolation of irrigation water and estimate its recharge return flow to the aquifers. One will be on flood irrigated lands and the other on a sprinkler. Measurements will assess irrigation efficiency and calculate irrigation efficiency.
- **“Optimizing the effluent from the Vertical Tube Reactor for Agricultural Applications”**
Submitted by the University of Denver
This project will be demonstrating the Vertical Tube Reactor (VTR) on a swine operation to evaluate the environmental effect of the direct field application of reacted effluent to agricultural lands. This proven process for municipal and industrial operations will be evaluated for its potential widespread use in livestock operations.
- **“A Measurement System for Off-site Mitigation That Uses NRCS Ecological Sites to Enhance Ecosystem Health and Wildlife Habitat”**
Submitted by the Ecosystems Management Research Institute
Project proposes to develop a measurement system that can be used by energy developers, agency managers and agricultural producers to determine equitable units for off-site mitigation of energy impacts. They will use NRCS ecological sites to develop descriptions of plant community composition and processes for historical states to develop an index to measure changes. They will use maps to show off-site areas that have potential enhancement benefits.

- more -

- **“Collaborative conservation of the private land sagebrush range in Colorado’s Western Slopes.”**

Submitted by: Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust

This project will establish public/private partnerships to increase awareness of cooperative conservation programs that benefit private landowners and to collaborate in the immediate permanent protection of several sagebrush range private ranch properties through the use of conservation easements. Project will show the value of conservation easements and treatable conservation credits through numerous workshops.

- **Tri-County Bio-Fuels**

Submitted by the East Central Colorado Resource Conservation and Development Council

This project will highlight the benefits of growing oilseed crops for commercial production of bio-based fuel using canola and camelina. Additionally the project will demonstrate the use of agronomic practices to reduce on farm fuel use. Best management practices will be developed looking at soils correlation, residue amounts and rotational options.

- **Solar Powered Irrigation Water Management**

Submitted by Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company

The objective of this project is to improve water and energy conservation. It will convert 5.8 miles of lateral ditches to pipeline and control and monitor flows through the new pipeline exclusively with solar-powered equipment. All gates and turn outs will be fully automated using the radio telemetry, which will be solar powered.

- **Installation and Demonstration of a SCADA System and Actuated Gates as Operational Improvements for Managing Surface Water Deliveries to Irrigators**

Submitted by the Greeley Irrigation Company

This project will be installing a SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system. This will include activated gates to more accurately monitor diversions and some deliveries, make remotely implemented changes in diverted flows, and to more rapidly react to storm flows on the river to help regulate flow into canals.

- more -

CIG proposals

Page 4

As part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service administers CIG, which provides competitive grants to state and local governments, tribes, non-governmental organizations, and individuals to promote the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies.

Additional information about CIG, including summaries of approved projects, is available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig>.

-- END --

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer